



**FSC Certification Report for the
2008 Annual Audit of:**

**Wisconsin County Forest Program
Managed by Wisconsin DNR**

Certificate Number: SCS-FM/COC-0083G

**Under the
SCS Forest Conservation Program
(An FSC-Accredited Certification Program)**

**Date of Field Audit: May 20-23, 2008
Date of Report: August 11, 2008; Finalized Sept. 10, 2008**

**Scientific Certification Systems
2000 Powell Street
Suite 1350
Emeryville, CA 94608**

SCS Contact: Dave Wager, Program Director
dwager@scscertified.com

Client Contact: Jeff Barkley

Section 2.0 (Surveillance Decision and Public Record) will be made publicly available on the SCS website (www.scscertified.com) no later than 60 days after the report is finalized.

1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 CONTACT INFORMATION

- Wisconsin DNR, County Forest Program
- Contact person: Jeff Barkley
- Address: 101 S. Webster St., P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921
- Telephone: (608) 264-9217
- Fax: (608) 266-8576
- E-mail: jeffrey.barkley@wisconsin.gov

1.2 General Background

The audit included a review of six Wisconsin Counties: Lincoln, Florence, Forest, Iron, Douglas, and Bayfield. This report covers the 3rd surveillance audit, following the 2005 certification of the WI County Forest Program (WCFP). Typically surveillance audits are conducted at a rate of one per year, beginning the year following award of certification.

The 2008 audit was conducted pursuant to the FSC guidelines for annual audits as well as the terms of the forest management certificate awarded by Scientific Certification Systems in 2005 (SCS-FM/COC-083G). All certificates issued by SCS under the aegis of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) require annual audits to ascertain ongoing compliance with the requirements and standards of certification. The full report of the initial evaluation is available on the SCS website.

http://www.scs-certified.com/forestry/forest_certclients.html.

Pursuant to FSC and SCS guidelines, annual/surveillance audits are not intended to comprehensively examine the full scope of the certified forest operations, as the cost of a full-scope audit would be prohibitive and it is not mandated by FSC audit protocols. Rather, annual audits are comprised of three main components:

- A focused assessment of the status of any outstanding conditions or corrective action requests
- Follow-up inquiry into any issues that may have arisen since the award of certification
- As necessary given the breadth of coverage associated with the first two components, an additional focus on selected topics or issues, the selection of which is not known to the certificate holder prior to the audit.

At the time of the May 2008 annual audit, there were 3 open Corrective Action Requests, the status of WI County Forest Program's response to these CARs was a major focus of the annual audit (see discussion, below for a listing of those CARs and their disposition as a result of this annual audit).

The counties enrolled in FSC certification at the time of the 2008 surveillance audit, and their acreages, are listed in table 1.

Table 1: FSC Certified Counties

County	FSC acres
Ashland	40,008
Barron	15,944
Bayfield	169,448
Chippewa	33,107
Clark	132,851
Douglas	272,843
Eau Claire	52,350
Florence	36,670
Forest	10,848
Iron	174,316
Jackson	120,886
Juneau	15,186
Lincoln	100,845
Oconto	43,556
Price	92,236
Sawyer	114,800
Taylor	17,633
Washburn	148,999
Wood	37,593
County Forest Total Certified Acres	1,630,119

Following the 2007 audit, the WI County Forest Program approved the enrollment of Lincoln County, Bayfield County, and Douglas County. The 2008 audit included assessments of all three of these newly enrolled Counties.

1.3 Guidelines/Standards Employed

For this annual audit, the SCS audit team evaluated the extent of conformance with the FSC Lake States Regional Standard Version 3.0.

2.0 SURVEILLANCE DECISION AND PUBLIC RECORD

2.1 Assessment Dates

Since the 2005 award of certification, there were audit activities undertaken on the following dates:

- On January 29, 2006 Jeff Barkley submitted (via email) a written description of actions taken by WCFP in response to the 11 outstanding CARs.
- On February 7-9, 2006 an SCS audit team (Wager and Ferrucci) conducted the annual audit of WCFP, including on-site inspections of field operations as well as extensive interviews with WCFP management and field personnel.
- Some additional consultations with DNR staff were completed following the field portion of the assessment
- On June 8, 2007 Jeff Barkley submitted (via e-mail) a written description of actions taken by WCFP in response to the remaining 6 open CARs.
- June 13-15, 2007 (Wager and Ferrucci) conducted the annual audit of WCFP, including on-site inspections of field operations as well as extensive interviews with WCFP management and field personnel.
- July 2, 2007 review of information regarding Lincoln County's enrollment into FSC group
- August 8 and 9, 2007 Interviews with Loren Ayers and Randy Hoffman of the Bureau of Endangered Resources
- On May 7, 2008 Jeff Barkley submitted (via e-mail) a written description of actions taken by WCFP in response to the 3 open CARs.
- May 20-23, 2008 (Wager and Ferrucci) conducted the annual audit of WCFP, including on-site inspections of field operations as well as extensive interviews with WCFP management and field personnel.

2.2 Assessment Personnel

For this annual audit, the team was comprised of Dave Wager and Mike Ferrucci. Both Mr. Wager and Mr. Ferrucci were part of the 2004 full evaluation as well as the 2003 preliminary evaluation and the 2006 annual audit, thus providing for good continuity.

Dave Wager

Mr. Wager is Director of Forest Management Certification for SCS. During his 8 years as Director, Mr. Wager has overseen the day-to-day operations of the program and conducted Forest Management and Chain-of-Custody evaluations throughout the world. Recent evaluations conducted by Mr. Wager include Minnesota DNR, Wisconsin County Forests, State of PA Bureau of Forestry, State of Massachusetts, Perak ITC- Malaysia, and Collins Pine Lakeview and Almanor Forests. In his role as Program Director, Mr. Wager oversees all first-time certification evaluations, annual audits, and contract renewal certifications on approximately 75 active clients. Mr. Wager has expertise in business and forest ecology (B.S. business, Skidmore College; M.S. Forest Resources, Utah State University) and utilizes both in his position with SCS. While studying forest ecology at Utah State University, Mr. Wager was awarded a NASA Graduate

Student Research Fellowship to develop dendrochronological techniques to assess Douglas-fir growth in Utah's Central Wasatch Mountains.

Michael Ferrucci

Michael Ferrucci is a founding partner and President of Interforest, LLC, and a partner in Ferrucci & Walicki, LLC, a land management company that has served private landowners in southern New England for 16 years. Its clients include private citizens, land trusts, municipalities, corporations, private water companies, and non-profit organizations. He has a B.Sc. degree in forestry from the University of Maine and a Master of Forestry degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Mr. Ferrucci's primary expertise is in management of watershed forests to provide timber, drinking water, and the protection of other values; in forest inventory and timber appraisal; hardwood forest silviculture and marketing; and the ecology and silviculture of natural forests of the eastern United States. He also lectures on private sector forestry, leadership, and forest resource management at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Mike Ferrucci served as a team member on the 2003 Full Evaluation of Wisconsin State Forests

2.3 Assessment Process

The following general steps were undertaken as part of the 2008 audit:

- Review of 2005 - 2007 certification reports
- Review of information supplied by selected Counties (Management plans and responses to CARs)
- Completion of the field audit
- Synthesis of findings, and judging performance relative to the FSC Lake States Standard
- Presentation of results
- Preparation of the written certification evaluation report, and this public summary

The field portion of the audit included a broad array of field sites designed to illustrate a cross-section of stand types and treatments, focusing on harvests and other site disturbing activities conducted within the last couple years. During the field audit, the SCS auditors engaged in extensive personal interviews with County and DNR staff and contractors.

Lincoln County	Tuesday, May 20, 2008	FSC and SFI
Dave Wager	SCS, FSC Lead Auditor, SFI Auditor	
Paul Pingrey	DNR Forest Certification Coordinator	
Kevin Kleinschmidt	Lincoln County Forest Administrator	
Bill Groth	DNR Liaison	
Rick Weide	DNR Wildlife Biologist	
Brian Spencer	DNR Forestry Staff Specialist	
Dave Bailey	DNR Forester- Spooner	
Jerrard Macholl	Lincoln County Forester	
Mike Luedeke	DNR Regional Forester	

Lee Rahlf
Dean Bowe

Lincoln County, Forester
Lincoln County Assistant Forest Administrator

Lincoln County Field Sites

1. Tract 16-07: ATV trail with rolling dips for good drainage; spur road/skid trail stemming off trail had effective berm to prevent access.
2. Tract #16-07: completed 50-acre NH thinning with gaps (30 to 60 foot radius) to regenerate intolerant oak and other. Smola Brothers contracting; logs decked roadside with town permission meant no landing; ATM habitat Hummock terrain with many kettles. Minor amounts of rutting- not exceeding contract standards.
3. T-17-07- Beaver Trail road: Active sale with handfeller/skidder; NH thinning (with small gaps); Schenzel Logging- (interview); lake shore management zone on steep slope had limited single tree selection with old forest/long lived species objective; equipment exclusion zone marked and followed;
4. T-03-07: completed, 37-acre NH thinning with gaps; small aspen regeneration patch; Smola Logging
5. Tamarack strip cut on Parish Road- excellent regeneration: cut in 3 units with 20 years between each cut;
6. T-03-06: completed, 52-acre aspen regeneration cut; age 39, delimbed in forest, good fine biomass, no large woody debris;
7. T-29-07: aspen regeneration cut, age-37 (cutting some stands early to balance age class distribution); standard marginal retention of oak, spruce, hemlock; no retention patches; whole tree chip (some delimbing in stand), fair amount of fine biomass, but very little coarse woody debris.
8. Near T-29-07: new road construction, culvert installed on wetland crossing.
9. T-38-06: 15-acre Jack pine clearcut; age 74; no retention, biomass harvest used to accomplish site prep needs.
10. T-38-06: Pronone granular applied to aspen to release red pine;
11. T-38-06: Red pine planting 1,000 trees per acre; good survival; v-trench technique used
12. T- 38-06: 3rd thinning of red pine plantation

Forest County Wednesday, May 21 FSC and SFI

Participants:

Mike Ferrucci, Lead Auditor, NSF-ISR
Paul Pingrey, Forest Certification Coordinator, WDNR
Michael Luedeke, WDNR Regional Forestry Leader
Phil Theiler, WDNR Area Forestry Supervisor
Brian Spencer, WDNR Areas Staff Specialist
Quinn Williams, WDNR Forestry Attorney
John Gritt, DNR Assistant County Forester, Wisconsin DNR
Craig Williams, Wisconsin DNR Liaison Forester
Dan Peters, Forest County Natural Resources Technician

Forest County Forest, Field Sites Visited:

1. Goblin Sale 438-07
2. Railroad Sale 435-06
3. Dump Sale 3-06

Florence County Thursday, May 21 FSC and SFI

Dave Wager	SCS, FSC Lead Auditor, SFI Auditor
Pat Smith	County Forest Administrator
Jeremy Holtz	DNR Wildlife Biologist
Stuart Boren	DNR Liaison Forester
Jeff Barkley	DNR County Forest Specialist
Tom Duke	Regional Staff Supervisor, DNR Antigo

Florence County Field Sites

1. Contract 692, Block 2: 33-acre Jack pine/aspen clearcut; goal to regenerate aspen, some scrub oak retained, minimal green tree retention; RMZ set well below required 50ft on Pine Creek at one point;
2. Cultural site of 1930's era barn identified and protective "no cut" buffer installed around it
3. Tract 13-96- Firebreak Pine planting: red pine planting at 700-800 trees per acre; helicopter herbicide of competing vegetation with glyphosate using sustainable forestry grant.
4. Tract 13-96: Successful natural regeneration of Jack pine, which is now preferred regeneration method for Jack pine.
5. Contract 691- Right of Way Sale along Bass Lake Fire Lane Road: Worked with town to widen right of way through timber harvest.
6. South Bush Lake Oak Sale – Block 1- Red oak and scrub oak regeneration cut; adequate green tree retention of pine and higher quality oak; aesthetic buffer along County C.
7. South Bush Lake Oak Sale- Block 2- Scrub oak with 80% mortality from gypsy moth, drought, forest tent caterpillar. Only retention was a couple pines, none of the live oak were retained. RMZ put in on Lake.
8. County maintained park- W Bass Lake Park: 20 campsites, beach, picnic area.
9. Contract 695, Block 4- aspen regeneration cut; logger had found 2 hawk nests (unsure of species- though) after starting logging; NHI had red shouldered hawk occurrence (1973 obs.) in stand; Block 2 managed for oak with cut of aspen and mixed hardwood;
10. Contract 694 Welfare Sale: Northern hardwood thinning, BA from ~120 to 80; some gaps observed; good species selection;
11. Washburn Falls on Popple River; RMZ buffer exceed requirements on non-navigable tributary;

Bayfield County Friday, May 21 FSC and SFI

Dave Wager	SCS, FSC Lead Auditor, SFI Auditor
Jeff Barkley	DNR County Forest Specialist

Steve Probst Assistant Forest Administrator

Todd Naas DNR Wildlife Biologist
Tim Davis DNR Liaison Forester
Kirby Dernovsek Bayfield County Forester
Mike Amman Bayfield County Forester
Jason Bodine Bayfield County Forester
Tom Duke Regional Staff Supervisor

Bayfield County Field Sites

1. Contract 2863, Tract 54-05: 34-acre aspen (with minor oak, birch component) regeneration cut. Pine and red maple maintained; B&B logging- interviewed logger.
2. Junction County A/Halfway Rd; Floating Pine barrens; area ¼ mile x 5 miles managed to promote shifting mosaic of early successional habitat to benefit sharp tailed grouse and other early successional spp.; goal to maintain approx 2000 acres of early successional habitat at any given time, minimize edge, and create large blocks to mimic natural disturbance patterns.
3. Contract 2886, Tract 15-06: 67-acre red pine thinning, 3rd entry.
4. Near contract 2886, red pine planting A: planted spring 2007 after trenching site preparation; red pine planting B: planted 2004 and released 2006 with Accord;
5. Contract 2953, Tract 21-07: 63-acre northern hardwood thinning w/ regeneration gaps; not yet cut, canopy gaps systematically placed (40 ft radius gap every 2 chains) throughout sale with prescribed 40% scarification of gap; gaps cover 9% of sale;
6. Tract 60-05: 47-acre oak shelterwood, cut 2006 retained 50 sq ft of basal area in oak with scattered white birch; fenced 29 acres of sale, scarified and planted limited amounts of white pine and cedar; dramatic difference between regeneration inside of fence relative to outside, numerous sprouting acorns, stump sprouts, and white birch present inside, and very little observed outside of fence. Permanent plots will be established inside and outside of sale to assess all flora. Made compelling case that forest with ~35 deer per sq mile (which has over 70% above goal) is severely impacted (see Recommendation 2008.2)
7. Contract 2880; 84-acre mixed hardwood sale with tamarack/black spruce cuts; could only access edge of sale

Iron County Thursday, May 22 FSC and SFI

Participants:

Mike Ferrucci, Lead Auditor, NSF-ISR
Dave Wager, FSC Lead Auditor, SCS
Jeff Barkley, Wisconsin DNR County Forest Specialist
Paul Pingrey, Forest Certification Coordinator, WDNR
Michael Luedeke, WDNR Regional Forestry Leader
Tom Duke, Staff Supervisor, Wisconsin DNR
Darryl Fenner, Acting DNR Liaison, DNR
Joe Vairus – Iron County Forest Administrator

Neal Martinko, Iron County Forester
C.E. Zinsmaster, Iron County Forester
Gary Glonek, Iron County Forester
Jane Severt, Executive Director, Wisconsin County Forest Association
Joe Schmidt, Forester – Mercer, Wisconsin DNR
Chris Niehaus, Forester – Mercer, Wisconsin DNR
Tara Stuhr, Office Manager / Trail Coordinator – Iron County Forest
Tom Thompson, Iron County Forestry Committee Chair
Angelo Aimone, Iron County Forestry Scaler
Gary Kangas, Logger Iron County
Tim Lee, North County Lumber

Iron County Forest, Field Sites Visited:

1. Sale 2279 Northern hardwood sale completed – rutting and undesigned trees cut
2. Sale 2275 Northern hardwood sale marked, did not pass review initially, remarked

Douglas County Friday, May 21 FSC and SFI

Participants:

Mike Ferrucci, Lead Auditor, NSF-ISR
Paul Pingrey, Forest Certification Coordinator, WDNR
Michael Luedeke, WDNR Regional Forestry Leader
Rod Fouks, DNR Team Leader
Rick Matlack, DNR Forester
Don Luebbe, DNR Liaison Forester
Greg Kessler, DNR Wildlife Biologist
Jon Harris, Douglas County Forest Director
Craig Golembiewski, Douglas County Forester
Jason Langenecker, Inventory Forester / GIS Specialist, Douglas County Forest
Jim Latvala, Douglas County Forester
Mark Hager, Douglas County Forester
David Cizmas, Douglas County Forester
Mark Schroeder, Resource and Recreation Manager, Douglas County Forest

Douglas County, Field Sites Visited:

1. Sale # 3745 Partially completed, includes selection harvest northern hardwoods and seed-tree harvest for white birch;
 - 1a. Older sale near Sale #3745 Completed shelterwood for oak regeneration, burned several times
2. Belden Swamp SNA – very large black spruce swamp protected (drove by)
3. Spruce River Block Grouse Management Area (drove by)
4. Town Line Road – several large clearcuts to salvage Jack Pine killed by JP Budworm – mechanical site preparation – planting – protection from deer browse by means of bud

capping – large block Jack Pine management supporting open lands mgmt (see Site #16 below)

5. Darwin's Loop - Douglas County forest road
6. ATV trail and winter snowmobile trail (seen at multiple locations, drove short sections)
7. Sale # 3785 Active jack pine salvage harvest nearly complete – drum chipper operating on yarded material
8. Strutter's Lane – new (relocated) road adjacent to Sale 3785 – crowned and ditched per BMPs
9. Walker Homestead Quarter Section – interpretive sign and older sale to promote natural Jack Pine mixed w. Oak (drove by)
10. Completed Jack Pine harvest with site preparation by blade scarification in rows previously thinned
11. Sale #3770 Jack Pine salvage area blade scarified for natural regeneration – left standing Jack Pine snags, not planting
12. Completed Jack Pine harvest with site preparation by tractor furrows for later planting – done as part of training exercise for WDNR – excellent example of benefits of the state-county partnership
13. Chief Kabemabe Village historic site sign (village site flooded by flowage dam)
14. Gordon Flowage County Park – campground, boat ramp w. Parking, large flowage behind dam maintained by DCF
15. Sale # 3753 Jack Pine salvage
16. Douglas County State Wildlife Area – 2,500 acres of county forests leased to state and managed with other state lands to comprise a large area for barrens management; also field trials area for hunting dogs – close co-operation with the “Friends of the Bird Sanctuary”
17. Sale 3755 Jack Pine and Aspen harvest near roads and trail – aesthetic provisions

2.4 Status of Extant Corrective Action Requests

Background/Justification: WCFP staff have not received training on identification and protection of cultural resources. This component of CAR 2004.8 has yet to be adequately addressed.	
CAR 2007.1	DNR must expand training programs to include protection of cultural resources. Note: “training” does not require formal classes/workshops in every instance; in many cases improving content and distribution of written training material may suffice.
Deadline	2008 surveillance audit
Reference	<i>Criterion 7.3</i>
Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments (2007-2008)	
County Forest Program Response:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training sessions completed 9/6/07 (Rhinelanders), 3/18/08 (Black River Falls), 4/3/08 (Wis. Rapids) and 4/8/08 (Barron) 	

- Participation in the training from Jeff Barkley (DNR County Forest Specialist), Mark Dudzik (DNR Archeologist), John Broihahn (Wisconsin State Historical Society Archeologist), and Jay Toth (Ho-Chunk Nation Archeologist)
- 95 total people attended. Participation from 25 of 29 counties
- Well-received training – plan to hold an annual session each year around same time frame

SCS Findings: SCS confirmed that the above training sessions were held. The WCFP will hold similar training sessions annually, thus hopefully expanding the training coverage from the majority of the counties to all the FSC participating counties.

Status August 2008: Closed

Background/Justification: Considerable work remains on the plan to improve flora and fauna monitoring.

CAR 2007.2	WCFP must demonstrate continued progress on implementing the improved flora and fauna monitoring framework as described in “Developing a Monitoring Framework”.
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Deadline	2008 surveillance audit
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Reference	<i>Criterion 8.1 and 8.2</i>
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Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments (2007-2008)

County Forest Program Response

WCFP Actions

- *Incorporate a monitoring section in Chapter 3000 of the County Forest Plans*
- *Close collaboration with Endangered Resources Monitoring Section on how best to monitor forest conditions*
- *Identification of species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) for each ecological landtype. The ecological landtypes can be correlated to the County Forests they encompass. Providing baseline information*
- *Continue to run FIA and Recon frequency information for County Forests and stay abreast of other monitoring results on County Forests (BMPs, Karner Blue HCP, Species specific information)*
- *Seek funding for implementation of monitoring framework.*
- *Establish releve’ plots on HCVF areas*

Progress / Completion

- *Recon frequency information available to counties (WisFIRS) and also an audit item on DNR audits of County Forests (every 3 years) - 2007.*
- *Wisconsin Forest Inventory and Reporting System (WisFIRS) goes live June 2007. For*

County Forests this includes greater capabilities for monitoring through more detailed RECON collection (added invasives, species specific information), tracking of accomplishments, and enhanced reporting capabilities.

- *Applied for grant through Wildlife Action Plan to implement monitoring action plan – 2007 (project unsuccessful- had been reported in 2007 report)*
- *Updated FIA information distributed to Counties – Nov. 2007. Information on net growth, volume, and growing stock mortality were gathered. As previously acknowledged this information is not statistically relevant for an individual county but does reflect the program as a whole. The DNR and Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) feel this information provides representative growth, volume, and mortality for the counties. Comparison with prior year's data has been completed and confirms our growth-to-removal ratios are sustainable.*
- *WCFA applied for, and received, a County Forest Sustainable grant to monitor HCVF areas on County Forests (follow through on FSC CAR 2004.11 but is germane to monitoring on the County Forests) – 11/07*
- *Submitted Budget Issue brief for 2010/11 biennium for County Forest Monitoring – Jan. 2008*
- *All long range County Forest Plans approved through respective County Boards – Monitoring included in Chapter 3000 – 4/2008*
- *DNR Forestry and Endangered Resources jointly submit a 2009/11 budget request (ongoing funding) for funding of annual monitoring activities on FSC-certified County Forests. Request is for \$1.495 million for the two year period.*
- *WCFA awarded grant (\$21,465) and contracts out initial set of HCVF monitoring – 4/2008*
- *DNR's Citizen-Based Monitoring Partnership Program allocated \$5,000 for a pilot floral and faunal monitoring project on Chippewa County. Beaver Creek Reserve's Citizen Science Center is working with Chippewa County administrators, the Chippewa County Land Trust and private landowners to develop and test a "bioblitz" wildlife and plant inventory on parcels being enrolled in the county's Wild Lakes Reserve Project. The bioblitz, to be conducted on August 23-24, 2008, is partially funded by the DNR Citizen-Based Monitoring Partnership Program.*

SCS Findings:

DNR continues to demonstrate some, but measured, progress on developing an improved flora and fauna monitoring. Examples of progress on monitoring include HCVF monitoring, improvement to the currency of RECON/WisFIRS and tracking new variables, such as invasive plants, in Recon. Bayfield County initiated its own enhanced flora and fauna monitoring with breeding bird population and deer browse monitoring projects. Approximately 350 breeding bird monitoring points were established across Bayfield County. A 29 acre deer exclosure was established to assess the impacts of deer browse on tree and herbaceous species.

In 2007 WCFP had sought funding for a flora and fauna monitoring program titled *Implementing the Wildlife Action Plan*. This project would have produced county forest specific and integrated regional flora and fauna monitoring plans. WCFP did not receive funding for the proposal, and

therefore needs an alternative approach. A budget initiative to fund the flora and fauna monitoring on the County Forests was submitted. Funding would begin with \$80,000 in 2011 and add an additional \$80,000 each year through 2014.

Considering that there is no indication as to whether or not this will be funded. Further improvements are necessary in monitoring, and CAR 2008.4 is being issued to ensure that progress continues.

Status August 2008: See CAR 2008.4

Background/Justification: Indicator 5.3.a. states: *Adequate quantities and a diversity of size classes of woody debris (considered a reinvestment of biological capital under this criterion—not an economic waste) are left on the forest floor to maintain ecosystem functions, wildlife habitats, and future forest productivity.* Also Indicator 6.3.b requires: *Well-distributed, large woody debris is maintained.* Indicator 6.3.c.1 states: *Biological legacies of the forest community are retained at the forest and stand levels, consistent with the objectives of the management plan, including but not limited to: large live and declining trees, coarse dead wood, logs, snags, den trees, and soil organic matter.* As noted in previous reports (Rec 2004.2 and Rec 2004.5) we have observed areas that are lacking in current and future woody debris. With emerging biomass markets adding to what are already excellent markets for utilization- we see that there is a potential to push the balance toward excessive utilization. Additionally, there is no readily available information of woody debris levels on County Forests (though estimates could be obtained through FIA data), targets for what County Forests should maintain, or practices/policies to achieve those targets.

CAR 2007.3	<p>Develop and implement guidelines for woody debris retention/recruitment that address both woody debris for wildlife and nutrient cycling/soil productivity.</p> <p>Note: per the existing recommendation 2004.5- County Forests are encouraged to also establish criteria for retention of the other aspects (beyond woody debris) of stand-level wildlife habitat elements (e.g., green tree retention, mast trees, den trees, and nest trees).</p>
Deadline	<p>Due to the highly technical nature and the numerous parties involved with this assignment, the CAR timeline is divided into the following phases and milestones (as proposed by WI DNR):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. March 2008: DNR will conduct a literature search and draft language. 2. June 2008: Council representatives and DNR established teams (such as the Silviculture and Public Lands Specialist Teams) will

	<p>review draft materials.</p> <p>3. June 2008 – June 2009: Stakeholder input on draft biomass guidelines and possible stakeholder review and input on Forest Management Guideline update.</p> <p>4. June 2009: Council adopts Forestland Biomass Harvesting Guidelines. Biomass guidelines may be incorporated into an update of the Wisconsin Forest Management Guidelines.</p>
Reference	<i>Indicators 5.3.a, 6.3.b, and 6.3.c</i>
Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments (2007-2008)	
<p>County Forest Program Response</p> <p><u>Proposed Action</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Woody Biomass Harvesting Guidelines for Forest Lands <p><u>Progress / Completion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept. 2007 – Council on Forestry sponsors / charges DNR Division of Forestry to coordinate development of Woody Biomass Harvesting guidelines • Fall / Winter 2007-08: Research and development of draft guidelines by Technical Team (Eunice Padley, Joe Kovach, Carmen Wagner, Sarah Herrick) • Winter 2007-08: Development of Scoping document framing out process for guideline development • Feb. 2008: Formation of Advisory Committee for Woody Biomass guidelines • March 2008: Selection of list of expert reviewers for DRAFT guidelines • April 2008: Distribution of DRAFT Woody Biomass Guidelines and associated white paper to expert reviewers. *Expert Reviewers include the WCFA Certification / Legislative Committee. • May 2008: Expert Reviewer comments returned to Technical Team <p>SCS Findings:</p> <p>SCS verified that the above actions have occurred. The Proposed Forestland Woody Biomass Harvesting Guidelines – April 8, 2008- were reviewed, and it appears that the WCFP is on track to meet this CAR.</p>	
Status August 2008: CAR Continued with expectation to meet original due date of 2009	

Recommendations:

The following recommendations were stipulated at the time of award of certification or during subsequent annual audits.

REC 2004.2	Reference: FSC Indicator 5.3.a
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Recommendation 2004.2- Counties should consider recruiting aspen for downed woody debris in even-aged management treatments (we observed few large aspen being retained on harvest sites).
Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments
<p>2006: Not aware of any changes to retention or recruitment policies.</p> <p>2007: No action taken on this recommendation. See CAR 2007.3</p> <p>2008: Good progress made on CAR 2007.3 regarding woody debris retention guidelines. Gaps still observed in green tree retention. See CAR 2008.2</p>

REC 2004.5	Reference: FSC Criterion/Indicator 6.3(a)3, 6.3(a)5, 6.3(b)1, 6.3(c)3
Recommendation 2004.5: County Forests should develop and implement quantitative guidelines for stand level retention (covering green trees, snags, downed woody debris) to ensure more consistent implementation.	
Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments	
<p>2006: No action on this recommendation. 2006 audit showed that this remains an opportunity for improvement, especially in even-aged harvests.</p> <p>2007: No action taken on this recommendation. This continues to be an area of concern. The recommendation is continued.</p> <p>2008: Process underway to develop green tree retention guidelines, but no progress implemented on the ground. See CAR 2008.2</p>	

REC 2004.6	Reference: FSC Criterion/Indicator 6.3a
County Forests with high deer densities should set up exclosures to measure deer impacts on tree and herbaceous species.	
Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments	
<p>2006: Not aware of any actions on this recommendation.</p> <p>2007: Counties have been very active in lobbying the State of WI to take additional actions to reduce deer population densities. There has been extensive research on deer impacts, several of which have evaluated exclosures. While WI DNR recognizes the effectiveness of exclosures, they do not see them as cost effective or practical for large scale forest management.</p> <p>2008: Lobbying by Counties has yet to produce tangible results. Lack of regeneration of some species and forest types remains a very serious concern (See photo Appendix A). Recommendation continued, and a future CAR is likely if the WCFP cannot demonstrate that it is executing all practical measures to exert its influence over this issue. Also see Recommendation 2008.1.</p>	

REC 2004.7	Reference: FSC Criterion 6.5
County Forests should develop and implement clear guidelines or standards for protection of water resources not covered under BMPs (e.g., vernal pool and wetland protection)	
Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments	
2006: Not aware of any actions on this recommendation 2007: No actions taken. This continues to be an area of concern. The recommendation is continued. 2008: Process is underway to rewrite BMP guidelines, which will cover vernal pools and wetlands.	

Background/Justification: The identification of HCVF that has been completed to-date for the WCFP is based on a partial (approx 10%) and non-systematic biotic inventory. It is very likely that unidentified areas that qualify as HCVF still exist.	
REC 2007.1	In the absence of systematic biotic inventories as done on the State Forests, County Forests should look for opportunities to use Recon and other inventory work to continue to identify areas qualifying as HCVF.
Reference	<i>Criterion 9.1</i>
Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments	
2008: Not aware of any measures taken to address this Recommendation.	

2.5 General Observations

All observations are included under the appropriate CAR, Recommendation, or in section 3.1.

2.6 New Corrective Action Requests and Recommendations

<p>Background/Justification: Indicator 6.2.b states that <i>if scientific data indicates the likely presence of state and/or Federally listed as threatened, endangered, of special concern, or sensitive populations, either new surveys are carried out before field-management activities begin or the forest owner or manager assumes their presence and makes appropriate modifications in forest management.</i></p> <p>SCS Observation from Florence County contract 695- block 4: a red shouldered hawk nest was listed in the NHI database. No surveys for red shouldered hawks were done prior to the sale, and the logging contractor identified two trees marked to cut that had hawk nests in them. Although these trees were not felled, the majority of trees around them were. The nests were not active at the time of the audit, and it remained uncertain what species of hawk had occupied these nests.</p> <p>American Marten have been identified throughout Iron County (including one timber sale during the 2006 audit), however, stands are not being surveyed for Marten prior to harvest or</p>
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<p>being managed as if they were present.</p> <p>Knowledge and utilization of the Wildlife Action Plan and related resources must be further incorporated into timber management. A primary goal of the Wildlife Action Plan is to increase awareness of, and protective measures for, species of greatest conservation need.</p>	
CAR 2008.1	WCFP must take actions to ensure conformance with Indicator 6.2.b by utilizing the “Endangered Resources Screening Guidance for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources” and by incorporating the Wildlife Action Plan and related resources into management of the County Forests.
Deadline	Re-certification evaluation- scheduled for 3 rd quarter 2009
Reference	<i>Indicator 6.2.b</i>

Observations:

Retention of trees for wildlife considerations (specifically mast, nest, and den trees) has been an inclusion in the Silvicultural and Aesthetics Handbook (HB2431.5 – pages 24-5 and 24-6 Marking Guidelines) for several years. However, current guidance does not address the green tree retention requirements for even-aged management as specified in Indicator 6.3.a.5. Additionally, the retention guidance has been subject to varied interpretation and inconsistent implementation. The statewide Silviculture Committee is in the process of reviewing and updating guidelines relating to stand-level wildlife habitat elements.

CAR 2008.2	Complete the process of updating reserve/retention guidelines, implement these guidelines, and begin to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation.
Deadline	Re-certification evaluation- scheduled for 3 rd quarter 2009
Reference	6.3(a)3, 6.3(a)5, 6.3(b)1, 6.3(c)3

Observations:

The following non-conformances were observed at Iron County:

Requirement: FSC Lake States Regional Standard Indicator 1.1.a. Forest management plans and operations comply with federal, state, county, municipal, and tribal laws, case law, and regulations.

For example:

- *All necessary permits are obtained.*
- *There is neither evidence nor substantial claims of continued or intentional non-compliance with laws and regulations that relate to forest management by the forest owner or manager.*

1.5.a. Forest owners or managers implement measures to prevent illegal and unauthorized activities in the forest.

For example:

- *The land manager paints and posts boundary notices, uses gates, makes periodic inspections, and reports illegal activities to the proper authorities.*

SCS Observation: Evidence and claims were presented to the audit team that a County forester in Iron County had intentionally instructed a logger to cut trees that had been reserved from the sale. This matter is still under investigation with a pending hearing in September 2008. As such this is presently considered to be a possible non-conformance.

Requirement: C1.6. Forest managers shall demonstrate a long-term commitment to adhere to the FSC Principles and Criteria.

SCS Observation: Iron County was solely responsible for a WCFP past non-conformance (see CAR 2004.4) and the County forester involved has resisted and possibly sought to undermine with the process to remedy the non-conformance. While Iron County has attempted to resolve the problem within collective bargaining constraints, these actions have not been successful to this point. The county's performance has not been compatible with a group member that is demonstrating a long-term commitment to adhere to the FSC certification standards. DNR and Iron County's actions in response to CAR 2004.4 involve a comprehensive pre-sale field inspection that when administered properly ensures that sales conform with required silvicultural guidelines. However, the process is highly inefficient and time consuming for both DNR and County staff and is ineffective if the sale is not administered properly as observed on Sale 2279 and 2275 during the 2008 audit.

Requirement: 6.5.a. A set of forestry best management practices (BMPs), approved by the state forestry agency or otherwise appropriate jurisdiction (e.g., BIA), that address water quality and soil erosion is adhered to (see also 1.1.b). These guidelines may include provisions on riparian management zones (RMZs), skidding, access roads, site preparation, log landings, stream crossings, disturbance of sensitive sites, and wetlands.

6.5.b. At a minimum, implementation of BMPs and other resource protection measures will result in the following:

Logging and Site Preparation

Logging operations and construction of roads and skid trails are conducted only during periods of weather when soil is least susceptible to compaction, surface erosion, or sediment transport into streams and other bodies of water.

For example:

Operations are carried out when soils are either dry enough or frozen enough to minimize disturbance and compaction. Vehicular access to roads is controlled to limit soil erosion and other forest damage.

SCS Observation:

BMP violations in the form of "excessive rutting", (i.e., rutting in violation of the Iron County rutting policy) were observed at Sale 2279 in Iron County. The sale administrator did not take appropriate action such as controlling or suspending access during wet/non-frozen ground conditions.

An FSC Group Manager is required to remove from the FSC group members that are repeatedly in non-conformance with the FSC standards. DNR has the following policy for removing non-conforming members from the FSC group:

Involuntary Departure from the Group

A group member found to be consistently out of compliance with the principles and standards of certification as implemented by the group(s), shall be removed from the certification group(s) if their continued participation, in the findings of the third party auditors, group manager, and other group members, jeopardize the group's certification status. In the event of a finding specific to only one group member, that county shall first be made aware of the finding and provided a six month time frame in which to initiate correction action. If that is unsuccessful, a written warning is to be issued from the group manager documenting the measures needed to bring that county into compliance and providing for a one year time frame to implement necessary changes. A group member will only be removed after these initial steps and after consultation and majority concurrence with the other members of that group.

SCS Observation: A non-conformance specific to Iron County was first observed in 2004. Although actions were taken by DNR and Iron County to remedy this non-conformance, the measures were not sufficient as demonstrated by a recurrence of the non-conformance in the 2008 audit. The audit team concludes that continued enrollment of Iron County in the WCFP Group jeopardizes the group's continued conformance with FSC unless effective corrective actions are now fully implemented.

CAR 2008.3	DNR must take action(s) to correct Iron County's repeated non-conformances. DNR's actions must be consistent with their "Involuntary Departure From Group" procedures as described in the Public Forest Lands Handbook.
Deadline	3 months from finalization of 2008 report
Reference	<i>Indicator 1.1.a., 1.5.a, 6.5.a, C.1.6, and Group Criteria D.1.5</i>

Observation: WCFP has yet to receive funding for the floral and faunal monitoring, and therefore needs to take additional actions.

CAR 2008.4	Find a way to fund the work outlined in the proposed monitoring program "Implementing the Wildlife Action Plan" or develop an alternate approach to improve flora and fauna monitoring. See recommendation 2008.2 for the components of a possible approach.
Deadline	Re-certification evaluation- scheduled for 3 rd quarter 2009
Reference	<i>Criterion 8.1, 8.2</i>

Recommendations

In addition to the prior recommendations that remain open, SCS issues one new recommendation.

Requirement: <i>FSC Indicator 6.3.a.3. Measures are taken to ensure the retention of endemic and difficult-to-regenerate species. For example: Deer populations are controlled to enhance successful regeneration.</i>	
SCS Observation: Deer browse in certain areas of the state is contributing to regeneration failures of desired species. WCFP is to be commended for its attempts to influence the legislature regarding deer harvest goals and policy, however, deer population numbers and impacts to regeneration remain problematic. See photographs in Appendix A.	
Recommendation 2008.1	The WCFP in cooperation with DNR should take additional measures to reduce the deer population to levels where ecosystem health is not compromised by deer browse.
Reference	<i>Indicator 6.3.a.3</i>

Observation: See CAR 2007.2	
Recommendation 2008.2	<p>The following multi-stepped process could be used to improve flora and fauna monitoring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Identify key flora and fauna monitoring questions, issues, and goals for County Forests, for example impacts of deer browse may be a key issue for County Forests; B. Summarize all of the existing monitoring programs and studies which provide information on the questions, issues, and goals defined in step A; C. Describe management actions/changes that can be implemented on County Forests as a result of the existing monitoring results; D. Develop an initial list of monitoring gaps, i.e., questions, issues, goals where information is lacking, and begin steps to monitor these areas.
Reference	<i>Criterion 8.1 and 8.2</i>

2.7 General Conclusions of the Annual Audit

Based upon information gathered through site visits, interviews, and document review, SCS concludes that management of the Wisconsin County Forest Program continues to be in overall conformance with the FSC Principles and Criteria. However, as described in sections 2.6 there are open CARs that must be met within the stipulated time frame. SCS observed numerous examples of exemplary management on Wisconsin County Forests during the 2008 audit. In conclusion continuation of the certification is warranted, subject to ongoing progress in closing out the open CARs and subject to subsequent annual audits.

3.0 DETAILED OBSERVATIONS

This section is divided into two parts: Section 3.1 details the conformance and non-conformance with the elements of the standard examined during this audit. Section 3.2 discusses any stakeholder comments.

3.1 Evaluation of Conformance

REQUIREMENT	NC	COMMENT/CAR
P6 Forest management shall conserve biological diversity and its associated values, water resources, soils, and unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes, and, by so doing, maintain the ecological functions and the integrity of the forest.		
C 6.2. Safeguards shall exist which protect rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitats (e.g., nesting and feeding areas). Conservation zones and protection areas shall be established, appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management and the uniqueness of the affected resources. Inappropriate hunting, fishing, trapping, and collecting shall be controlled.	C/NC	See discussion under CAR 2008.1
C6.3. Ecological functions and values shall be maintained intact, enhanced, or restored, including: a) Forest regeneration and succession. b) Genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity. c) Natural cycles that affect the productivity of the forest ecosystem.	C/NC	See discussion under CAR 2008.2
C6.6. Management systems shall promote the development and adoption of environmentally friendly non-chemical methods of pest management and strive to avoid the use of chemical pesticides. World Health Organization Type 1A and 1B and chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides; pesticides that are persistent, toxic or whose derivatives remain biologically active and accumulate in the food chain beyond their intended use; as well as any pesticides banned by international agreement, shall be prohibited. If chemicals are used, proper equipment and training shall be provided to minimize health and environmental risks.	C	No FSC prohibited chemicals are being used, a derogation for hexazinone is pending. Chemical use is limited to conifer establishment projects, wildlife opening projects, and treatment of invasive exotic spp. Written prescriptions are used in chemical pesticide application projects.
C6.7. Chemicals, containers, liquid and solid non-organic wastes including fuel and oil shall be disposed of in an environmentally appropriate manner at off-site locations.	C	Observed conformance with handling of non-organic waste.
P7 A management plan -- appropriate to the scale and intensity of the operations -- shall be written, implemented, and kept up to date. The long-term objectives of management, and the means of achieving them, shall be clearly stated.		
C7.1. The management plan and supporting documents shall provide: a) Management objectives. b) description of the forest resources to be managed, environmental limitations, land use and ownership status, socio-economic conditions, and a profile of adjacent lands. c) Description of silvicultural and/or other management system, based on the ecology of the forest in question and information gathered through resource inventories. d) Rationale for rate of annual harvest and species selection. e) Provisions for monitoring of forest growth and	C	New management plans have been approved and implementation has begun on all FSC counties.

dynamics. f) Environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments. g) Plans for the identification and protection of rare, threatened and endangered species. h) Maps describing the forest resource base including protected areas, planned management activities and land ownership. i) Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used.		
C7.2. The management plan shall be periodically revised to incorporate the results of monitoring or new scientific and technical information, as well as to respond to changing environmental, social and economic circumstances.	C	Revised management plans incorporated new information, and have been implemented.
C7.3. Forest workers shall receive adequate training and supervision to ensure proper implementation of the management plans.	C	DNR and WCFP continues to provide training opportunities for their staff. Most notably, training on cultural resources was provided in 2007.
C7.4. While respecting the confidentiality of information, forest managers shall make publicly available a summary of the primary elements of the management plan, including those listed in Criterion 7.1.	C	The entire management plans are publically available.

3.2 Stakeholder Comment

See section 2.3.

3.3 Controversial Issues

No exceptionally controversial or difficult issues presented themselves during this surveillance audit.

3.4 Changes in Certificate Scope

Following the 2007 audit, the WI County Forest Program approved the enrollment of Lincoln, Bayfield, and Douglas County into the FSC group. See Table 1 in section 1.2 for details.

Appendix A- Deer Exclosure in Bayfield Count.



Figures 1,2: All acres in the stand were treated with the same harvest prescription. Figure 1 (left side) shows regeneration inside the fence; Figure 2 (right) shows regeneration outside of the fence.

